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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000888

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP, NOVEMBER 3, 2005

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 835

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 735

[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 877

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for Reasons
1.4 (B) and (D).

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE UNDER DURESS

[1](#)1. (C) Agriculture Minister Zsolt Simon (of the Hungarian SMK party) has recently come under pressure because of allegations that an agriculture company he co-owned received SKK 8 million (around USD 250,000) in agricultural subsidies from the state budget in 2003. Simon sold his share in the company in 2004. Prime Minister Dzurinda noted that this is "an ethical issue for the Minister and the Party of the Hungarian Coalition," and that Minister Simon continues to have his trust. On October 30, SMK leader Bela Bugar accused the Slovak Intelligence Service of orchestrating the campaign against Simon. The Agriculture Minister was noticeably distracted during the Ambassador's October 31 meeting with him, running his fingers through his hair and frequently checking messages on his blackberry. Simon is hoping to avoid the fate of his former Deputy, Marian Radosovsky, who stepped down October 27 under pressure from KDH leadership because of similar ethical complaints. Radosovsky's company received SKK 7.5 million (around USD 235,000) in subsidies from the Agriculture Ministry between 2002 and 2004.

RADIO STATION PUTS POLS IN INTERESTING POSITIONS

[1](#)2. (SBU) Local radio station Fun Radio's morning show takes its honored guests out to perform stunts concocted by the station without the prior knowledge of the unsuspecting guests. Some of the gags have featured high-level GOS officials; for example, Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda was taken to the main train station, where the PM -- who for many years was a railway employee -- was seen out on the tracks dispatching trains. Opposition leader Vladimir Meciar was given a temporary job as a taxi driver, while on October 31 Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Kukan appeared in front of the U.S. Embassy, handing out cups of hot tea to visa applicants waiting for their interviews as part of a Fun Radio stunt.

POLICE GO ON STRIKE; LEADER GETS DEMOTED

[1](#)3. (SBU) Over 2,000 policemen and women from all corners of Slovakia took part in their first protest rally, held in front of the PM's office in Bratislava on October 25. The policemen were protesting the decreasing police budget and the widening salary gap between policemen and soldiers. According to the trade unions, the policemen's welfare situation is untenable. In response to the strike, Minister of the Interior Vladimir Palko dismissed the police trade union boss, Miroslav Litva, from his position as head of the MOI's research and technological development department. Palko considers the police protest as the first attempt to "infiltrate" politics into the operation of the department (Note: One MOI source told us that there are indications that the opposition party ANO was involved in the initiation of the rally, and several opposition MPs -- including Smer's Robert Kalinak -- also participated in the rally. End Note). Palko also plans to punish Litva's deputy, Marian Magdosko, for organizing the rally. Under Slovak law, the police are banned from striking; Palko believed that a strong response was necessary to discipline the police corps for what he saw as a clear demonstration of disloyalty, while trade union council KOZ is protesting his "abuse of power" in demoting police union leaders.

ROMA IN PRESOV: NO WALL WILL BE BUILT...

[1](#)4. (SBU) Poloff learned from a October 18 meeting with Partners for Democratic Change in Slovakia (PDCS, an organization that administers a USAID-funded Roma integration program in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) that the so-called "Roma wall" (ref B) will not be built. Instead, a fence will be repaired around a retirement community in the area, two playgrounds will be built, and a

room in a nearby community center will be turned into a neighborhood police station manned by two officers. PDCS says the Roma community is supportive of this plan, which they say is the result of the efforts of Roma Plenipotentiary Klara Orgovanova's intervention with city officials. PDCS notes, however, that the city is treating the symptoms, but not the problem; Presov officials are considering the relocation of even more Roma to the Stara Tehelna neighborhood, and the construction of additional low-income housing -- but not the services to support it -- in the area. The Ambassador will be speaking in Presov next week and will raise the issue and reinforce USG interest in the situation.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS ARE BEING ENFORCED

15. (SBU) A 57 year old bus driver in Presov was recently convicted of "defamation on the basis of race, nationality, or belief" after he called two Romani sisters traveling on his bus without tickets "black mouths that should be sent to the gas chamber" in January 2004. He was fined SK 5000 (around USD 150).

GENERAL PROSECUTOR PROPOSES ABOLISHING FASCIST PARTY

16. (SBU) General Prosecutor Dobroslav Trnka submitted a proposal on October 31 to abolish fascist political party Slovenska Pospolitost (ref c). Trnka claims that the organization's bylaws, programs, and activities are in violation of the Slovak constitution, laws, and international commitments to protecting individual rights. The General Prosecutor began reviewing the status of the group after the NGO People Against Racism filed a claim against Pospolitost in July.

GOS ENGAGES SUDAN, CANCELS DEBT

17. (SBU) Slovakia wrote off Sudan's debts in compliance with its official development and aid program. The debt relief, amounting to USD 38 million, was part of GOS attempts to support Sudanese economic development, democratization, good governance. Slovakia has also upgraded its Consulate General in Khartoum to an Embassy, and appointed a Sudanese Honorary Consul. Ministry of Finance officials tell us that the GOS is also undertaking the debt relief to meet Official Development Aid (ODA) to Gross Net Income goals pursuant to the conclusions of the June 2005 EU Summit in Brussels. The relief of the debt, which was considered a "state financial asset," will also have a direct affect on the budget, increasing Slovakia's fiscal deficit. It is likely that the GOS canceled the debt this year to ease entry in to the ERM2 "Euro waiting room" in June 2006.

SLOVAKS DON'T TRUST HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS?

18. (U) An October 19 poll released by Slovak daily SME asked if readers had sent money for earthquake relief to Asia. While 14 percent responded "yes," 18 percent responded "No, I have enough of my own problems," and 61 percent responded "No, I don't trust humanitarian organizations" (7 percent were "undecided").
VALLEE

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